Visual Studies

ISSN: 1472-586X (Print) 1472-5878 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rvst20

Mirror images: mediated sociality and the presence of the future

Till Förster

To cite this article: Till Förster (2018) Mirror images: mediated sociality and the presence of the future, Visual Studies, 33:1, 84-97

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2018.1426247

Visual Studies, 2018
Vol. 33, No. 1, 84–97, https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2018.1426247

Mirror images: mediated sociality and the presence of the future

TILL FÖRSTER

Today, most Africans who have a mobile phone have become photographers while professional photographers are going out of business. Picture files displayed on the small screens increasingly replace photoprints. This transformation affects the use of pictures deeply. It facilitates the exchange of pictures and broadens the ways in which ordinary people situate themselves in a social context and how they imagine their own place in their future life-worlds. This contribution looks at how the use of pictures has changed since the incredibly rapid proliferation of smartphones in northern Côte d'Ivoire. It examines smartphones as storage devices and how and when picture files are displayed on the screens of phones. It traces social practices of displaying and commenting on pictures through different social milieus by juxtaposing three examples: the shared watching of pictures in private spaces; the display of pictures as proofs of a specific event, in this case a pilgrimage to Mecca; and finally the use of smartphones as albums to demonstrate artisanal skills. I argue that such practices do not foster a devaluation of the picture but rather endow it with new meanings, as the case of a gay couple shows. Pictures on phones are used to imagine a possible, alternative future of the actors in a changing life-world.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation theory builds on a fairly limited set of presumptions and premises. In the field of culture, and partially building on Anthony Giddens' (1990) seminal book on the *Consequences of Modernity*, John Tomlinson (1999) was among the first to argue that globalisation is essentially based on intensifying connections (Hannerz 1996) across the globe and between formerly distinct societies – and not on processes of rationalisation through an ever-increasing division of labour. As connectivity builds on technology, it entails consequences for all societies; this growing connectivity will lead to a commodification of cultural creativity – rather than the other way round – and eventually to the hegemony of the strongest. Tomlinson claims that 'pre-modern' societies were much more bound to their natural environment, their language, local food and their religion. By contrast, globalisation leads to a de-territorialised culture with little local ties. Even if this process is very uneven and, from a geographic point of view, much stronger in industrialised countries, it is a general tendency that shows similar consequences everywhere in the world.

One of these consequences is that social life is increasingly dominated by new media. Like many anthropologists (e.g. Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Lewellen 2002), Tomlinson writes that globalisation is first and foremost a cultural transformation with economic implications. Globalised societies are embedded in cultural flows that permeate them and that are no longer bound to a specific society (Appadurai 1996). Though always subject to counter-currents of localisation, culture is finally bound to transnational or, to use an older vocabulary, cross-cultural landscapes that shape all spheres of social life. Appadurai argued that mediascapes, together with four other global 'scapes', define the capacity to produce and distribute pictures and images. Convincing as it seems at first sight, this strand of theorising globalisation has shortcomings that become visible when media are studied in real social and cultural settings. Smartphone photography is a case in point. As a new medium, it is unthinkable without globalisation. However, that does not mean that it generates more or less automatically the global mediascapes that Appadurai had in mind.

The social and cultural change induced since the turn of the century by mobile telephony in general and the smartphone in particular is stupendous. Africa is no exception.[1] The pace of the proliferation of mobile phones in the first decade and of smartphones in the second decade of the twenty-first century is simply breathtaking. No innovation introduced by development agencies has had such a deep and lasting impact on the daily lives of millions of Africans. Wherever there is a network, almost everybody makes use of the new technology – directly or indirectly. However, there is not one model or one process as, for instance, the

Till Förster is an anthropologist and art historian. He holds a PhD from the Free University Berlin. Since 2001, he is chair of social anthropology at the University of Basel, Switzerland. Till Förster has specialised on art, visual culture and political transformations in West and Central Africa. Since 1979, he conducted field research for many years, mainly in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon. His publications focus on visual culture, social creativity, as well as the post-colonial state, urban politics and governance.

acceleration and intensification of communication, that fits all social change related to mobile telecommunication. People make use of phones and their technology to different degrees and in different forms (Hahn and Kibora 2008; De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh, and Brinkman 2009). While many studies examine social connectivity, the shrinking of space or the transnational connections that mobile communication permits and to some degree entails,[2] I will rather look at how the visual component of the new media, namely smartphone photography informs the sociality of ordinary people in everyday life. I will examine how this medial change affects the actors' agency and their life-worldly understanding of present and future.[3]

Smartphone photography has had an enormous influence on African visual culture. Today, almost all owners of smartphones have become photographers. Professional photographers who ran photostudios since many years, sometimes their entire life, are going out of business. Photographic studios disappear from the cityscapes, and itinerant photographers who were combing urban neighbourhoods and many a village sell their cameras and try to establish some other business where their knowledge might still be of help. Photoprints have become rare as only very few laboratories have survived the move from conventional film to digital photography.

Yet, pictures are more present than ever in the daily lives of many Africans – even where telecommunication networks are lacking. Smartphone photography has become so ubiquitous that any study of visual culture in Africa would be incomplete without it. Smartphone pictures are easy to take because the phone sets the parameters more or less automatically and they are inexpensive if not entirely free. Furthermore, it is easy to share them as the picture can be displayed immediately on the screen of the phone, and the owners can send them directly or through the net from one device to another. Of course, the latter is no longer free and hence a practice that not all users of mobile phones will use as often as the camera of their phones. Statistics about the proliferation of pictures files in Africa and beyond can be misleading as they are often based on the presumption that the use of smartphones is directly related to internet access.[4] Smartphones can be used as simple storage devices with a camera and a music player, as this contribution shows – but sharing visually or electronically is definitely central to smartphone photography.

There are alternatives to the net. Whether a smartphone has internet access or not is a secondary question for many ordinary users. They can and often do transmit picture and music files by other means. Though nothing seems to be more ephemeral than a file on a smartphone, it still has a social significance. It can get lost together with the phone when the device is stolen or when 'it falls into water', but acts of deleting a picture file deliberately or hiding it in a separate folder also play an important role – as much as displaying a particular picture to a selected audience.[5] Accordingly, the move towards mobile devices and digital photography means to look attentively at the countless interactions, many of them ephemeral, that shape the way media are made useful by actors (Vokes 2012).

To study these practices will generate more insights into the global flow of pictures and images than survey studies of their distribution worldwide. However, my aim is another: I rather want to look more deeply into how smartphone photography is used by actors within horizons of their daily life-worlds; how they make pictures visible to others, how they show them in a way that satisfies the social relationships between them and their relatives, friends, customers, fellow believers and whoever is invited to have a look at them. I argue that this perspective will provide more insights into how the spectators as social actors relate to each other and how they can enhance their agency by imagining themselves as actors in a future context of social practices.

SMARTPHONE PICTURE ECONOMIES

The use of smartphones as cameras has an economic basis, which needs to be clarified before one can examine the use of smartphones as cameras and photo albums. If data connections or smartphones are too expensive, it directly affects their use. There is still a huge gap between capital cities where many more people can afford permanent internet access and secondary cities or the rural countryside where phone companies often do not offer fast internet access at all. In addition, many young men and women, who would be the most proficient users, do not have a regular income and have to rely on their parents or relatives for airtime credit. However, young men and women have developed their own strategies to work around such constraints. They do use their smartphones – but they do so in different ways. This study addresses precisely this group, the less affluent youth in a secondary city in northern Côte d'Ivoire and its rural hinterland. It is based on a long familiarity with the region, where I conducted research since the late 1970s – long before mobile phones, let alone smartphones became available. However, research for this article was conducted between 2012 and February 2017, mainly through participation in and observation of interactions mediated through smartphones.[6]

My knowledge of the mobile phone market is mainly based on conversations with four vendors and observations in public places.[7] Two of the vendors had stalls at Korhogo's main market, one was an itinerant vendor who lived in a neighbourhood close to the city centre, and the fourth lived in a rural village about a day's journey from the city. The first two saw themselves as specialised retailers who sold phones and also offered supporting services related to mobile telephony and data communications. Their market stalls were erected near the entrance of the market and resembled tiny shops. A waist-high showcase separated the interior from the narrow aisle that drew through the shacks. Behind the glass of the showcase, phones were aligned in orderly rows, each on a plastic support. Since a couple of years, they mainly sold smartphones, the two vendors said. They both offered a wide scope of phones, from cheap 'chintok'[8] to expensive Korean Galaxys. On the walls behind the showcases, they displayed accessories, memory cards, earphones, chargers, cables and all sorts of covers. In the rear, they had a small table and a computer where they could upload files on phones and tablet computers. They were also actively trying to attract customers and threw a glance at younger men and women who passed by and who, they thought, could afford the more expensive models.

Smaller, 'ordinary phones with keys' were aligned in two rows below the bigger devices that should attract the attention of their clientele. According to their estimation, simple phones would soon phase-out. Only elderly people would still buy such phones if they lost their old ones. These phones were easier to use, the vendors said: since old people were used to keys, they would find it difficult to adapt to the small screens of smartphones. 'Anyway, they wouldn't use the smart functions of such a phone',[9] Amadou[10] said, the older of the two. 'You need to show them how these phones work, but even then, many of them come back after a day or two and complain about their phones. And when you check, you'll often find that there is nothing wrong with it – it is them who can't use it'. Bakary, who holds a stand a few steps away from Amadou's, said that the youth usually knows very well how to use a smartphone, but 'they also come back and complain – only to get another one for less. Or they have changed the battery in between, and you'd get an old, exhausted battery back if you don't pay attention'. Like almost all retailers, the two are not satisfied with their clientele.

Retailers rarely sell sim cards, though they provide such services if they are asked to do so. Most customers already have one, and those who do not will rather go to one of the agencies of the three big mobile phone companies. Customers who can afford new smartphones and who do not have a sim card yet or who want to have a second one know that their phone number has to be registered together with a copy of their ID card. The configuration of smartphones is part of the agencies' daily business, as it is usually combined with the sale of airtime for internet access.

Seriba, the third, itinerant, vendor, has no place where one can regularly meet him. He cannot afford the market fees collected by the urban council. He is always on the move, mainly in the northern neighbourhoods of the city where he lives. He has two mobile phones, one with two sim cards, the other with one. The easiest way to reach him is to call him, and he will come to the places where his customers are. Seriba does not sell brand-new phones, his phones are 'almost new'. Some look as if they were never used, others have scratches and their batteries are weak. He usually lowers the price when the buyer becomes aware of such deficiencies. They sometimes ask why Seriba sells some phones without a charger – though he immediately offers to bring one if the customer insists. He rarely says where his phones come from, which leaves room for suspicions, too.

When buying a phone from Seriba, one may find that the memory card is already filled with pictures and music. Seriba is not very cautious and claims that he does not look into the phone when he gets one. Pictures may thus move from one hand to the other, and whatever is stored on it may come as a surprise to those who have bought a second-hand phone. Gona, an elderly man in his 60s, is an example. In 2016, he invested all his savings in a pilgrimage to Mecca. Shortly before he left Korhogo for the hajj in early September, he bought a smartphone with a large screen and a good camera to document his travels from start to finish. Not being aware that older pictures might already be on the phone, he showed his photographs around after he had completed the hajj until the viewers began to laugh. They had scrolled through the pictures and accidentally saw the ones that had already been on the phone – young women in sexy postures. Gona was very irritated and immediately assured them that he had neither taken nor seen these pictures before. Being illiterate, he was not very skilled in using a smartphone and asked his son who had attended school to delete the pictures 'immediately and without a trace'.

The use of phones requires a certain mastery of reading skills. Elderly people who never attended school often ask their children or younger relatives for help if they need to use some of the more complex functions of a

mobile phone. For instance, when they want to save a number, they may hand over their phone to someone who can store the number and the name in the directory of the phone. Some elder people need assistance for even the most elementary use of phones. They may know how to receive a call, but some have difficulties to dial a longer number. Seydou, the fourth vendor who lives in a rural town, transfers older contacts to new phones when he sells one, and he also does so when his clients need to update a number or a name later. Though more difficult to use, he says, smartphones have some advantages: one can link a contact to a photograph – if there is one. When he sells a smartphone, he usually installs the apps for his clients, and if there is an older phone, he searches whether there is an old directory on it and whether the owner has pictures of his friends and relatives. Sometimes, he takes snapshots of the people that the client calls most often, for instance of their children when they live in town. Seydou calls this *service après-vente*, 'after-sale service'. In a rural town, he adds, there is much more to do than in the city where everybody knows how to use a phone.

Seydou has seen many a phone and its folders with pictures and music. They are the two most important folders, he says. The youth need them – even if they cannot afford the expenses for regular internet access. Some use the phone as a sort of radio or recorder. They have the latest songs on it or they register the gigs of local musicians when they perform in town. If they want to have songs or albums of international stars, they can get them as well. In most towns, one can find a guy with a phone or a computer who has a big collection of music and photographs on it and who offers to transfer a file for a small fee. The transfer of a simple and widespread photograph, say a photograph of the Kaaba in Mecca, costs 50 frs. CFA (0.08 €), photographs or a song of an international star between 100 and 400 frs. CFA (0.16–0.61 €), and an album between 1000 and 1500 frs. CFA (1.53–2.29 €). Until recently, such services channelled the dissemination of pictures in rural areas much more than the internet as data connections were very slow and often non-existent in more remote places. A 2G access to the net was and often still is rare in such areas, and the bandwidth of such access was still too narrow to download big files. Thus, the main source for pictures were petty service providers as Seriba and Seydou. To some extent, they are still intermediaries between their customers and the internet and need a comprehensive repertoire of picture files on their phones or computers.

Whoever offered to transfer pictures and music on phones and other hand-held devices had to have collections that covered many a field of interest. Islamic themes were most prominent. The Kaaba and the Grand Mosque of Mecca from different angles, during day and night, illuminated or in the sun, filled with praying believers or empty – it was all there, together with pictures of mosques that the customers would be more familiar with, e.g. the Friday mosques in Abidjan, Bouaké and, of course, the big mosque in Korhogo. Pictures of carpets showing the Grand Mosque together with Mecca's cityscape were available as well, besides other elements of worship as, for instance, calligraphies of the Islamic creed and the *sūrat al-fātihah* in an elaborate *naskh*-writing. Christian counterparts were comparatively rare, but pictures of Notre Dame de la Paix in Yamoussoukro, the political capital of Côte d'Ivoire were offered. The church, one of the biggest worldwide, was also an emblem of national pride. Besides such emblems of faith, religious figures played an important role, in particular Muslim preachers as Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara from Mali (Soares 2013). Leaders of Salafist movements in northern Mali were absent – but Osama bin Laden was represented by several photographs in his known posture: wagging forefinger, white garment and a Kalashnikov in the background.

Another thematic field was celebrities. International stars, such as Bob Marley, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Sylvester Stallone, and Lucky Dube were as popular as stars from the sub-region, for instance Alpha Blondy and Tiken Jah Fakoly for those who had been teenagers in the 1980s and 1990s and Didier Bilé, Soum Bill, Petit Yodé and the Poussins Chocs for younger men. Local musicians as well-known xylophone players were represented by their music and sometimes footage of a rather bad quality, but rarely by photographs. More prominent were football players, in particular Didier Drogba who was and to some extent still is an idol of the youth. His career stands for the dreams of many: leaving the daily misery behind and becoming a highly-paid football star.

Picture collections existed also for political leaders and social movements. Thomas Sankara, the charismatic president of Burkina Faso, assassinated in 1987, was very prominent, together with Che Guevara. They were both seen as heroes of 'the African youth', though most who had their pictures on their smartphones were not yet born when these heroes were still alive. Politicians who had a direct influence on Ivorian politics were also available. The historic father of the nation, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, was represented by a whole series of pictures, sometimes together with other important politicians of his days, first the French presidents Charles de Gaulle, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterrand, but also John F. Kennedy, Julius

Nyerere, Léopold Sédar Senghor and others. Comparatively few pictures existed for his successors, presidents Henri Konan Bédié, Robert Guéï and Laurent Gbagbo. Gbagbo was despised in northern Côte d'Ivoire as he was considered to be responsible for the military crisis and the civil war that had separated the country into two halves between 2002 and 2011.[11] The current president Alassane Ouattara was, however, represented in all collections. Caricatures existed of some international politicians: there were dogs with the head of George Bush and dwarfs with the head of Jacques Chirac. Some pictures were animated, as the dog image of George Bush that showed him barking and fawning.

In urban areas with better internet access, the picture collections of the already mentioned themes are increasingly complemented and to some degree replaced by internet searches, but some genres are secured in hidden folders that contain dubious pictures. 'If you want them, you need to know that they exist', said Seydou, 'else the guys [the providers] will not show them – but once you tell them that you know, it's easy'. In these folders, pornographic pictures are most prominent. Many of them show white women, the others African and Asian women and couples. Still pictures prevail, but some are animated.[12] They depict women opening their brassiere and shaking their breasts. Others are much more offensive and show couples having sex. Unsurprisingly, these photographs sell best among young men, and the hard-core pictures are also more expensive than the other, softer ones. 'But for us, it doesn't matter', Seydou added, 'uploading such pictures takes the same time as uploading the picture of the president. You only get more for it – so, nobody would refuse to provide love pictures'.[13] Another hidden genre were pictures displaying violence. There were photographs of car accidents and wounded persons. The latter also included pictures of disabled fighters taken during civil war.

It is safe to assume that the repertoires of such service providers mirror more or less the local demand of pictures. Much more rarely, the collections are also depositories for pictures taken by customers. If there is a public event that many people might have an interest in, service providers like Seydou may ask professional photographers whether they can help them to distribute the pictures. Many small vendors have a more intimate knowledge of the neighbourhoods where they live and offer their services while the few professional photographers are operating in the entire city. The professionals may have printers or access to computer stores and cyber cafés where they can print copies for their clientele as many still want to have hardcopies of big family celebrations. And professionals often produce films in addition to the stills. Unlike the small vendors, they have tripods, which is a comparatively expensive investment. The vendors then share their earnings with the photographer. For some customers, these repertoires are the main source for pictures, but many more also make use of other sources and share pictures with friends and relatives – and they themselves take snapshots wherever possible. These photographs usually outnumber the others by far, and they are only shared with friends who have a personal interest in them.

SMARTPHONES AS PRIVATE STORAGE DEVICES

Many young men and women in northern Côte d'Ivoire use their smartphones solely as cameras and storage devices. Their phones are not equipped with a sim card or there is almost no credit on it so that the holder cannot use it except for receiving calls. As unused prepaid sim cards will be blocked after 3–6 months, it is important to keep a little credit on it and to make a call at least every 3 months or so.[14] Nonetheless, these young men and women make extensive use of their smartphones. On the one hand, they use some apps much more often than older people. On the other hand, because they are often unable to pay for additional services such as, for instance, internet access and data connections, they skilfully try to circumvent such limitations by getting access to one of the rare WLAN networks in town. Of course, such strategies do not always work, and they are entirely useless in rural towns where the big phone companies do not offer any reliable data connection.

The few who can afford permanent data connections and who are *en ligne* day in and day out usually belong to affluent families. Yet, the vast majority in this group still uses pre-paid sim cards as mobile phone contracts would require a bank account that most young men and women cannot have. Many want to be reachable on all major networks and have more than one sim card. As in other African countries, young people in northern Côte d'Ivoire who can afford it prefer smartphones that accept two sim cards, and even two may not be enough. Many have three sim cards and exchange them regularly to receive calls from friends who have the same network.

Since calling has become comparatively cheap, many will use their phones for short calls but still avoid longer ones, but financial limitations continue to play a role.[15] Popular imagination has it that young women always have the nicest phones but never airtime credit.[16] Many of them embellish their phones with the accessories that Amadou and Bakary sell: glittering, semi-transparent covers or, if that is too expensive, pink or light blue plastic covers that have round ears and make the phone look like a cuddly toy. Young women may urge their

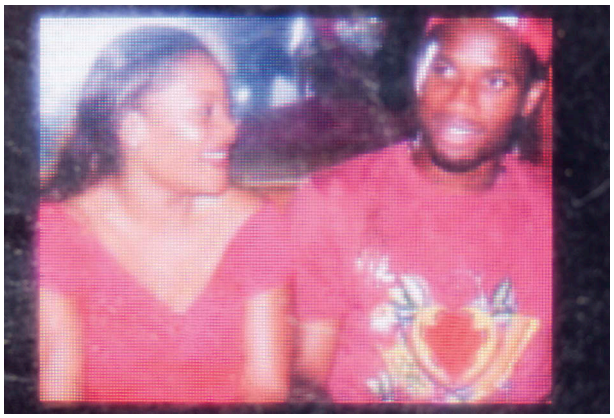

FIGURE 1. Friendship photographs are often taken spontaneously. Many of them are blurred and difficult to watch on small screens. All photographs by the author.

boyfriends to pay and transmit pre-paid airtime to them. Such requests are very common and have shaped the popular imagination of what young women expect from a partnership: cash and cell phones.[17] And young men have a better standing if they can offer their girlfriends airtime or even a nice phone.

There are more differences between the urban youth and rural folks that are neither related to financial constraints nor to the local history of visual culture. To some extent, they mirror rural and urban life-worlds. An average photo collection of a young man living in a rural town is likely to contain photographs of his success as a farmer. Photographs of workers tying cotton to huge bundles are a popular subject, and so are snapshots of men and women in front of racks full of maize cobs. In an urban context, traders often want to be depicted in their shops filled with whatever commodities they may sell. If they are accompanied by their employees and apprentices, the better. Truckers may want to be depicted in front of the giant 24 wheelers that they drive. Artisans may proudly display their tools and workshops, together with workpieces. For some, it is important to have such pictures at hand. Taylors, hairdressers, poster designers, painters, but also masons, floor tilers and ornamental metalworkers usually have photographs of their work on their phones. Sometimes, these virtual collections complement older brochures, but they may also replace them entirely.

In any case, urbanites would take such photographs themselves or they would ask friends and relatives to do it for them. The photographs then accumulate on the phones, but they are rarely printed. There is a former photo lab in Korhogo that offers such service and that can even print small posters, but most often, snapshots are left as picture files on phones and are never printed. Sooner or later, the phone becomes the main device to

FIGURE 2. Collections on smartphones usually contain many photographs of relatives. Image edited by the author to protect identity.

display photographs. Even if the owners have older collections of prints, it is more likely that they will use their smartphone to display the pictures.

As memory cards are comparatively cheap and sold in almost every little stand together with smartphones, the owner usually has storage space for several hundred pictures. Only when attending big events and shooting long footage, memory capacity may become an issue. Picture folders are usually subdivided into thematic subfolders. The biggest folder is often filled with what René Egloff (2013) calls 'friendship photos' (Figure 1). Most photographs of this genre show friends and relatives together with the owner of the phone. Though selfies are rapidly spreading in northern Côte d'Ivoire, too, the majority of friendship photographs are still taken by a third person. A reason is the persisting normativity of older portrait photography (Förster 2015). Over the twentieth century, 'correct' portraits taken by professional photographers on film had developed into two types. First, the passport photograph which showed the face of the person and the upper half of the chest. Its picture frame was predefined by the widespread Rolleiflex 6 × 6 cameras and therefore

displayed more than the face. Second, the portrait of the standing person that displayed all parts of the body. To some extent, such portraits were still indebted to the representation of the standing human body sculpted in wood, which was the most important anthropomorphic representation in the older visual culture of the region.

The ways of seeing and subsequently the emerging practice of smartphone photography thus had a habitual dimension which shaped the genre of friendship photographs until recently. Many people in rural areas still want to see the entire body of the person from top to toe, and that requires a greater distance between the depicted person and the photographer than the focal length of most smartphone lenses would allow, varying between a light wide angle and a standard lens. In large cities, such expectations faded with the introduction of smartphone photography. While spontaneous snapshots were exceptional until about the end of the military insurgency in 2011, they have become increasingly popular since the subsequent pacification of the country. Today, most owners of smartphones are used to taking spontaneous snapshots whenever they think suitable. Since snapshot photography with mobile phones does not need any training and can be practiced by anyone, formerly stable genres such as the two portrait genres begin to merge. When scrolling through a picture folder today, it would be hard to attribute friendship photographs to one or the other genre of portraiture (Figure 2).

As the iconography has become less normative, the photographs can more easily bear the seal of the event when they were taken. However, as almost no one has a training in photographic skills, the photographs are often under- or overexposed, taken against bright sunlight or in a dimly lit room. Many photographs are blurred because they were taken during feats and joyous get-togethers under bad lighting conditions and when the people were moving fast. Such series can be fairly repetitive, and sometimes the spectator is unable to see more than a silhouette in different postures. One has to know the depicted persons very well to be able to identify them. Other photographs show people in places that are known to both the depicted person and the owner of the phone, but the settings are not always as distinct as they could be and thus call for interpretive efforts. Looking at the photograph on the screen of the phone is often not enough to evoke the event. To share its memory, the actors need to 'watch'[18] the photograph by embedding it in a social practice of interpretation, for instance by engaging in a narrative about what has happened at that moment in their lives and why that specific event took place in a particular location. The actors thus reconstruct the situation when the photograph was taken. The less clear the photographs are, the more such practices are needed to evoke and re-imagine the original situation.

SHOWING PICTURES ON SCREENS

The act of showing is crucial for an understanding of how pictures become images in the minds of the people and how pictures move from one phone to another, from one spectator to the next and eventually from one culture to another. Pictures are not self-evident. Unlike language, pictures call for additional interpretive efforts 'to make them speak' – they do not speak themselves nor do pictures transmit an unambiguous message. They need to be embedded in a signifying context, for instance a narrative or a sensory experience that has additional evocative power. The latter complement the mediality of the photographs and make it distinct in that particular context. More precisely, it is the actors who do so when they make use of photographs, framing them in a specific situation as something that makes sense for them.

Such situations are complex interactions between those who watch pictures on phones, the persons visible on the phone and sometimes absent third persons. Three cases may help to outline the scope of these interactions and situations. The first is a more intimate setting where friendship photographs are discussed. The place is a patio of a private house in a suburban neighbourhood of Korhogo. It is an evening and because of the dry season, thick dust turns the pale light of the street lamps into a yellow mist that covers everything like a filthy blanket. It is the season when most people in the neighbourhood are coughing and sniffing. Pauline is about 20 and the niece of the owner of the house. She works as an apprentice in a little barber shop, and because there are more customers the evening, Pauline usually does not come back before dark. That evening, Aminata, a friend waits for her on the veranda. She is as young as her, and for some time, they had attended school together. Aminata now lives in another neighbourhood, not too far away. Her father insists that she should not *se promener en ville*, that means, hang around with boys in town. She has to go back soon, so she takes out her phone as the two sit together while Pauline's uncle and another guest are sitting close to them on the veranda.

'Have you seen this?' Aminata asks. She shows the picture of a young woman, still a teenager, sitting on a motorcycle behind the driver, also a young man. The tank is covered with yellow plastic, which means that the motorcycle serves as a public taxi. 'And she said that she wouldn't come because she is afraid of riding a

mototaxi!', Pauline squeals briefly. 'I've got this from a friend', Aminata says. 'She is lying to us, she simply doesn't want to come to the party in the school'. Most photographs are transmitted via Bluetooth technology. In this case, Aminata wanted to have the file as a proof that her friend is untrue to her and her other friends. Together with Pauline, she begins to scroll through the picture folder. 'I knew it', she adds. The photograph nourishes suspicion but also curiosity to learn more about what the young woman does and what she would not do.

After a short while, Aminata and Pauline come across older photographs that show the two together with the young woman that was sitting on the motorcycle. 'That was last year, *quand on a fait la jeunesse ensemble*'. Basically translated, 'doing the youth together' means to enjoy life to the full. The first picture shows a group of young men and women standing in front of a sliding gate, big enough for a lorry to drive through. A young guy is kneeling in front of the group and mugs while the others look straight into the camera. 'Oh, that was when we had the big storeroom last year, right?' Pauline asks, implicitly referring to the dance evenings that the group in the picture organise once or twice a year. Aminata confirms, but she also says that it must have been two years ago. Aminata is on the photograph, and Pauline stands right next to her. 'Look at what you wear – it was still that blue skirt of your school uniform. Last year, you had already left school, and you had the fancy jeans with the glitter'. She enlarges the picture by wiping over the screen. The part where Pauline is standing becomes bigger, but the picture is also less sharp now. Pauline looks carefully. 'Yes, you're right. That must have been two years ago. How I enjoyed that evening! I was still hoping to get a grant for one of the big schools[19] – but now, I'm still waiting'. Pauline takes a deep breath, 'I'm just an apprentice in a barber shop – as if I'd never gone to school. That's not right'.

The conversation ends a little later as Aminata has to go home. The picture brought back memories of hopes that did not become real. But it could do so only in a setting where the two young women directed their attention towards the details of the picture. In the course of the conversation, they developed an intentional relationship to the picture and watched it more carefully than scrolling quickly through the folder would have allowed them to do. The mediality of the picture on the small screen of the smartphone fed into this act as well: enlarging the scene to have a closer look at Pauline's clothes was essential to evoke the memories.

The second example is a semi-public event. Songuifolo is a fervent Muslim and owns a small business. As middle man and carrier, he buys cashew nuts in the hinterland of the city and ships them to the harbour, from where they are exported to Europe and North America. He has an extended network of business partners in the entire region. In 2016, he has joined the group of pilgrims that leaves Korhogo every year to travel to Mecca. Returning from the hajj is a highly ceremonial event. Fellow Muslims welcome the pilgrim when he comes home and when he prays in the local mosque for the first time after his arrival. The new haji is not allowed to leave his house for a month and will receive his brothers and sisters in faith at home. Songuifolo had asked a professional film team to document his arrival. They were present when he entered his home, and they waited for him with their cameras when he first set foot in the mosque of his community. Like most pilgrims, Songuifolo had also taken photographs from the moment he left Korhogo until his return weeks later. There were more than 300 photographs on his smartphone.

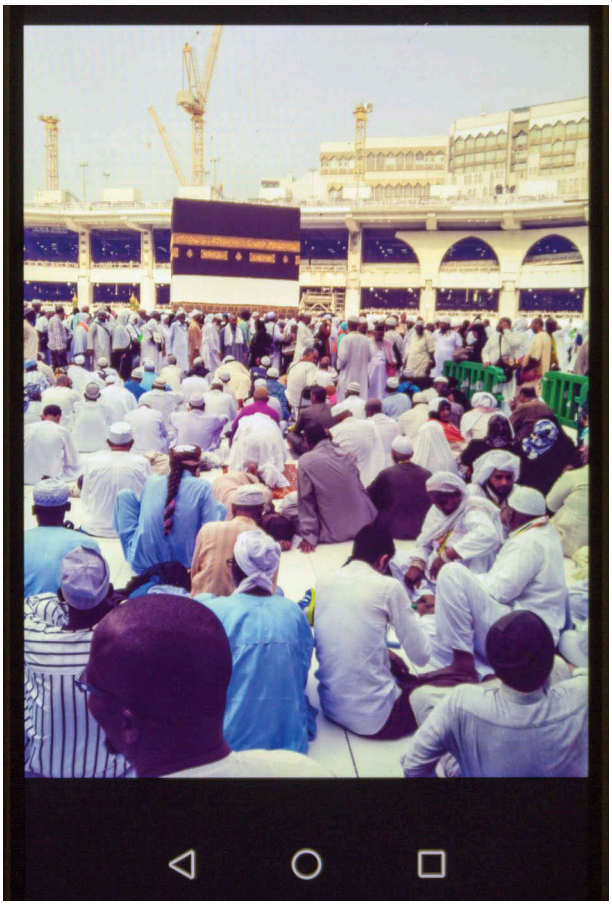

FIGURE 3. Documentary photograph from the hajj.

Many dignitaries visited Songuifolo during the weeks of seclusion. They showed their respect and asked him about his experience during the hardships of the hajj. Songuifolo then asked them to watch. After a few days, he had received the DVD that the film team had

produced. He put it into the player of his living room and switched it on while circulating his smartphone with all the pictures on it. In groups of two or three, the visitors watched the pictures on the phone, then handed it over to the next.

Songuifolo had documented everything. The photographs showed him when he was entering the bus that took him to Abidjan and the airport, when he was waiting in the departure hall, the other pilgrims from Côte d'Ivoire with their bags in orange, white and green, the colours of the Ivorian *tricolore*, the airport personnel that directed them to the bus that took them to the plane, the staircases to the entrance of the plane, the plane itself, the stewardesses, the seatmates left and right, the clouds, the meals they got during the flight, the arrival in Jeddah, the arrival hall, the bus that took them to the hotel, the lobby of the hotel, the room and the furniture therein, including the big flat screen on the wall. Still more photographs showed him during the ritual acts. When walking counter-clockwise around the Kaaba, he had lifted his phone to capture himself in the middle of the masses of pilgrims, took photographs when he finally approached the Black Stone and kissed it. Songuifolo had also taken photographs of others who were close to him while he was performing the rites (Figure 3). Shaky photographs showed him running between the hills of al-Safa and al-Marwah, while the photographs taken next to the Zamzam well and the plains of Mount Arafat were clearer. Finally, one saw him with a shaved head and slaughtering a ram. The return journey was as comprehensively documented as the outward trip to Mecca.

Songuifolo had taken many photographs himself, but he had also asked a couple of fellow pilgrims to take several of him performing a ritual act. He had no prints and used the little smartphone to show his collection and indeed, the entire hajj from beginning to end. Only occasionally, when his visitors got lost or could not make sense of a photograph, he took the phone back and explained the picture, sometimes enlarging a detail. He had not deleted a single picture as he thought that they all showed sacred acts and sites and should therefore be saved 'forever'. For the same reason, he kept this smartphone in a locked drawer. Only when he wanted to show his collection of picture did he take the phone out and display the pictures. Accordingly, some photographs raised riddles and questions. There were snapshots that showed only the backs of the heads of the pilgrims walking in front of Songuifolo, others depicted the flat screen television set in the hotel room with a banner at its lower edge, and still others showed an empty bathroom. Numerous pictures showed the television screen displaying the Grand Mosque and the Kaaba, which was only a few steps away from the hotel.

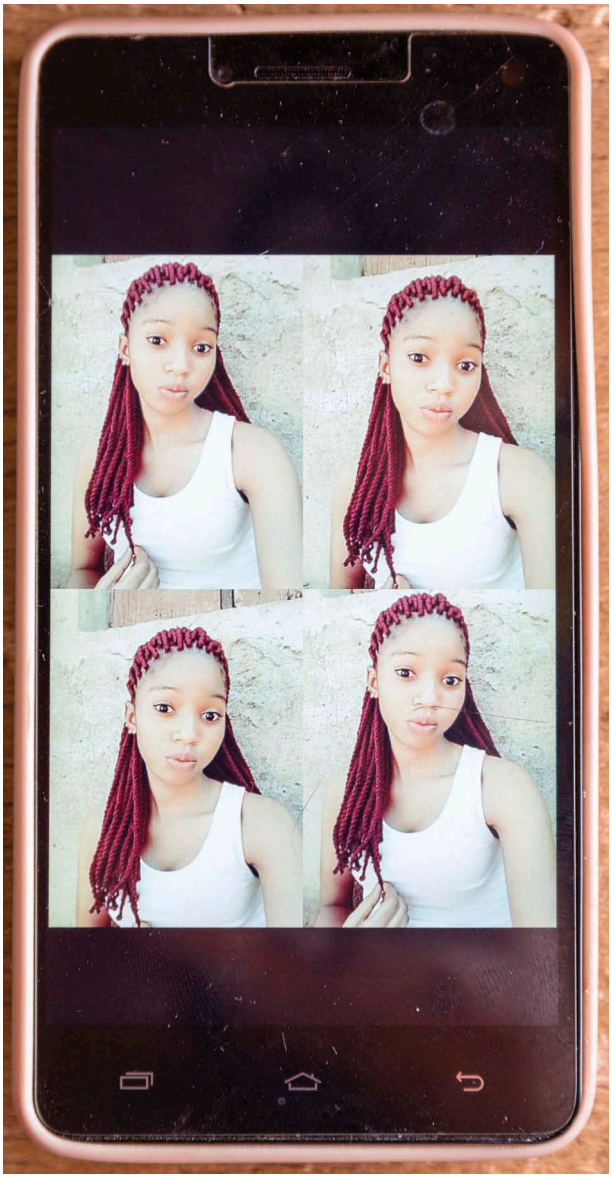

FIGURE 4. Photograph on the smartphone of a hairdresser displaying a popular haircut.

When scrolling through the collection, Songuifolo's guests came across these pictures, and some were asking him about them. Songuifolo commented on all photographs that his visitors had difficulties to understand. Whenever they raised a question, he answered it with the authority of someone 'who had been there', and that meant of a haji whose religious authority nobody would question. While he was doing so, the film of his arrival in Korhogo was displayed on the television screen in the background, accompanied by pious songs. With regard to 'bad' pictures, he told his visitors what he was doing at the moment or why it was impossible to do better pictures. 'The queue was

FIGURE 5. Photograph on the smartphone of a hairdresser showing an elaborate hairstyle.

enormous, you can't imagine how long it was. The people were pushing each other, and you had to pay attention not to fall. Somebody had told me that falling down there would be the end', Songuifolo said. On another picture, which showed several arms in front of a black background, he commented: 'That was very close to the Kaaba. Everybody wants to touch it; they push you from all sides, and if you don't stand firmly on the ground, you'll fall – and you won't get up again. The others would just stamp over you. Somebody nudged me when I was taking the picture'. It did not matter whether these pictures were 'bad' or not, whether they had a recognisable subject or whether they could have been taken anywhere. They instigated comments that related the general narrative of the hajj to Songuifolo's

FIGURE 6. Hairdresser cross-dressing as a woman with a wig. Image edited by the author to protect identity.

idiosyncratic experience of his personal pilgrimage. His guests knew very well what a pilgrim had to do as they were all believers, and some were hajis as well, but the pictures, together with Songuifolo's comments, allowed them to reconstruct the event, to revive the situation when the photographs were taken.

The third and last example is a more anonymous way of showing pictures on smartphones. Malik is a hairdresser and stylist of Fulani origin. Together with his friend Paul, he works in a small but renowned studio right in the city centre. They are both in their early 20s, while the studio is owned by a middle-aged Jula woman. Unlike ordinary hairdressers, who usually do all sorts of haircuts, they have specialised on complex hairstyles and on artificial hair, *les mèches*, 'the strands' that they weave into the natural hair of their clients. Therefore, the studio is more expensive than other studios, and its walls are not covered with large posters that show different standard haircuts. They work along the lines that their clients indicate and create individual hairstyles. Strands of hair in many different varieties, displayed in transparent plastic bags, hang on the walls, besides a big mirror and a small television set in a corner of the room. The studio also produces wigs on demand. For that purpose, they have two styrofoam heads on the counter of the small studio, where Malik can put the wigs when they want to work on them.

The studio also has no album to show what the two hairdressers can do. Malik explains that their 'hair creations' are so unique that they cannot and do not

want to reduce them to a few standard models, as other hairdressers do. They have two smartphones on which they can display their work – one belongs to Malik, while the other is owned by *La dame*, the proprietor. When they have created a new hairstyle, they take photographs and store them on the phone so that later customers can appreciate them (Figure 4). Frequently, they take snapshots from different angles so that their work is well documented. Malik has an app on his phone which allows him to arrange several photographs on the screen. If one scrolls through the collection, one can look at the same hairstyle from two, three or four perspectives. Sometimes, he also duplicates the same picture and merges for copies on the screen. Through the app, he can also add a waving banner with a few words to the pictures, e.g. 'Happy Valentine's Day' or 'In Loving Memory'.

Women who enter the studio as possible customers are invited to have a look at the phone. They then scroll through the picture files, and when they come across a particular hairstyle that they like, Malik begins to talk to them. He does not want to copy an existing style, he says, he wants to adapt it to the woman and her character (Figure 5). 'It often takes much longer than what the others do: they let them [the women] chose from the posters, and then, they simply reproduce that model', Malik says. The act of showing the pictures on the screen is a moment of ekphrasis. Malik has to translate his ideas of beauty into words: He has to explain why a particular style will fit better to a woman's character than another. Again, this is done by commenting on the photographs – as Songuifolo did on his 'bad' photographs from Mecca.

But there is more to it. Commenting on pictures on Malik's smartphone means to appeal to the imagination of the women and how a particular hairstyle will enhance their lives. 'It's about dreaming', Malik says, 'I urge them to imagine themselves as another person with a different, a completely different look'. That transformation of the person also applies to himself. Some of the photographs do not show former customers – they show Malik dressed up as a woman (Figure 6). He does not mention it when a woman scrolls through the collection, and many do not seem to realise that these photographs show a man. They just scroll over them – at least, the women I was able to observe.

Gay men and lesbian women are facing strong discrimination in Korhogo. Many Muslims in town simply deny that queer sexual orientations exist and believe that such things are an outcome of Western decadence.[20] By contrast, Abidjan, the country's biggest city and economic hub, is perceived by many as paradise for those who want to live their sexuality beyond the usual role models. Unsurprisingly, Malik and Paul said that they wanted to leave Korhogo in favour of another, bigger city. Perhaps Abidjan, maybe Paris, they said. In any case, Malik would marginalise himself if he would ever become visible as a gay man in town. Such an act could even become risky if it were discovered by one of the self-declared guardians of public morals. Such fundamentalists had their own mosques in town, and since a couple of years, they were increasingly gaining influence on public opinion.

However, Malik could claim that the pictures on his smartphone were related to his profession as hairdresser and wigmaker. They constituted a space where he could try out alternative social roles, where he could become somebody else without being pinned down to it. Very much as in the two other examples, the photo gallery on his smartphone mirrored his life – with all its tensions and contradictions. He could make his other identity visible by sharing his photographs with friends as other young people also did.[21] When he showed his photo collection to my field assistant[22] and me, he let us scroll through the collection as we thought best. A few days later, we asked him about the photographs and his own role. His answer was modest and honest. He knew, he said, that we would tolerate his way of living. 'If you are a stylist', he added, 'you learn how to look at people'.[23]

MOVING IMAGES

Photographs are not isolated depictions of past situations. They call for a social practice that makes them part of the present. Else they cannot become images, that is, ideas of how life had been or how it could be – in the present as well as in the future. As perceivable pictures, photographs have a double-sided character. On the one hand, they carry the imprint of the moment when they were taken. On the other, they are open to interpretation – interpretations that can generate more than one meaning and that allow the users to imagine alternatives to their present life. The tension between the two dimensions is what makes photographs move.

As picture files, photographs can move from one medium to the other or, as I have shown, from one smartphone to another. The internet is not a precondition – though it facilitates the exchange of files over long distances. Files can be transmitted through Bluetooth technology or directly by cable from one device to another. The emergence of small service providers who have large picture galleries on their phones or computers fills the gap if the internet is not

accessible or too expensive. In particular, young people without an income cannot afford permanent data connections. They transfer files directly from one phone to another or make use of such services. Even if the users of smartphones do not have internet access or if they do not have a sim card in their phones – they are still 'remotely global' (Piot 1999) and develop their own agency. As actors, they engage with the new medium and make it theirs. However, the basic act of sharing a picture is to watch it together and eventually to comment on it, as the two young women did in the suburban patio.

The picture galleries on the phones are global and local at the same time. The picture of the Grand Mosque with the Kaaba in the middle is one of the most widespread files among Muslims in northern Côte d'Ivoire, with very few variations. Regardless of its iconic character, which leaves little room for variation, the owners of the phones embed it deeply in their own lives. But as a global icon, the picture permeates social and cultural spaces – no matter how remote they are. Being an ordinary pilgrim in a modest hotel room, Songuifolo had no chance to take a picture of the Grand Mosque from a bird's eye view. But he had snapshots of the television screen in his hotel room that showed the mosque and the Kaaba precisely from this angle, and these photographs were taken in Mecca. They were neither downloaded from the internet – which he would have been unable to do – nor were they bought from one of the petty vendors in town. They were part of his pilgrimage, of his stay in Mecca. The imperfection of the picture on the television screen merged with the technical restrictions of smartphone photography. But precisely these limitations opened a space of imagination that allowed the actors to construct and reconstruct the initial situations when the photographs were taken as part of their present lives. Songuifolo saw himself as a true and devout Muslim – a status that would enhance his agency in the city in the future. Showing the pictures of his hajj to visitors meant to make them aware that this status had already become a reality. In fact, the act of showing produced this social reality and made it part of the present.

In both cases, the photographs are watched as traces of events that the owners of the smartphones had experienced in the past. At first sight, they are means to remember a situation. The two young women as well as the pilgrim take the photographs as indices that mirror an event that has gone by. The pictures are attributed indexical qualities. Photographs do not *have* such indexical qualities – they are rather created when the spectators engage with pictures. Resuming Azoulay's (2008) term, pictures *become* indices when seeing turns into watching. The two young women reiterate an episode of their life by focusing on a particular detail of the picture, Pauline's blue skirt. They reconstruct more than the date when the picture was taken; they re-narrate and thus recreate the situation as an object of their shared memory, which results in a different weighing of its relevance for their present lives.[24] Pauline is in a state of waithood since she left school and regrets the loss of hope that she had to experience in-between. However, by re-interpreting the picture together with Aminata, the two also create future alternatives to the past. And these alternatives inform their agency.

Songuifolo's, the pilgrim, has another attitude towards the pictures on his smartphone. He also attributes indexical qualities to them, but he does so in another way. The pictures are not exclusively based on his idiosyncratic views of Mecca and the Great Mosque – they are rather a middle ground between him and an imaginary archive of global Muslim icons that his visitors are also familiar with. As a proof of his hajj, the pictures relate to collective imageries of faith and simultaneously to his new status as a true believer. When displayed in the living room of his home where Songuifolo receives his brothers in faith, they will only work as long as the spectators recognise them simultaneously as mirrors of what they are already familiar with and as depictions of the pilgrim's individual experience. The pictures would not turn into images of a 'true' hajj if the spectators would watch them only as coincidental snapshots. But once the link between the pilgrim's individual experience and the collective imageries of Islam is established by the spectators, the pictures work as proofs and gain their indexical quality for Songuifolo's future. They do so by reflecting the pilgrim's ritual passage as an event of his life as well as the unchanging character of the global icons of faith. Scrolling through the photo gallery on the phone complements and to some extent replaces the narration of the haji who comments only on a few minor aspects of his travel.

The third case is again different. Malik's photo gallery is no less part of his life – but it does not have an indexical character. It is endowed with another meaning and to some extent undermines his ordinary, public identity. The gallery mirrors a sort of buffer zone where Malik can act out queer identities without immediately having to face the consequences. What the spectators perceive depends on how they watch these photographs. Some see them only as evidence of his professional skills as a hairdresser. They do not care about gender and sexual orientation – or they pretend not to notice the queer

role-taking that becomes visible in these pictures. As a collection, the photographs create a social space of possibilities that Malik would have difficulties to access in what is usually called 'real' life. These possibilities are part of his imagination of another life – a life that he plans to begin sometime soon in another city, maybe Abidjan or even Paris.

However, it would be incorrect to separate the photo gallery on his smartphone and his ordinary identity as two layers of social reality: the two spheres are so deeply entangled that Malik's imagination is as much part of his agency as his judgment of the situations he would have to face when he walks through the streets of downtown Korhogo. Malik may first imagine himself as a young woman with long flowing hair, but by becoming visible on his smartphone as one, he also is one and inscribes himself in the city's visual culture. As imagery, his photo gallery mirrors his ambivalent status, that is, his life at the margins of a Muslim society that increasingly tends to adopt a stricter interpretation of the Quran.

The three examples converge in one point: the pictures on smartphones allow the actors to imagine social lives – in the past, the present and not least in the future. Pictures thus turn into images that are comments on the actors' ordinary social lives. The pictures open an imagined social space where the actors can adopt roles and identities – some of them shape their memories of the past, others their experience of the present, and still others coalesce into future alternatives to their everyday lives. The pictures on smartphones become mirror images of what life could be. Perhaps not yet in the present, but the future is an open space that the actors imagine while watching the pictures. It is this, the actors' capacity to imagine which is, I argue, a precondition for pictures to transcend social and cultural boundaries, to move from one medium to another and eventually to make the future a possibility of the present.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

NOTES

[1] See the overviews by Donner (2008), Ling and Donner (2009), Etzo and Collender (2010), and Zegeye and Muponde (2012).

[2] Campbell and Park (2008), Pfaff (2010), and Tazanu (2012). In that sense, new media, pictures and their movement are *not a sign of* globalisation – they *are* globalisation (Rehbein and Schwengel 2008, 127).

[3] On new media, social practice and agency in the context of globalisation in general see Beyer (2006) and Friedman and Randeria (2004).

[4] https://qz.com/748354/smartphone-use-has-more-than-doubled-in-africa-in-two-years/, 04.03.2017.

[5] During my fieldwork in West Africa, the loss of phones was frequently attributed to the unskillfulness of children and women 'who let it fall into water'.

[6] On the use of ordinary phones during the military insurgency, see Förster (2013).

[7] I have not collected quantitative data on the dissemination and spread of smartphones in northern Côte d'Ivoire. I take the vendors as naïve experts whose knowledge is based on everyday experience and who know the local market for such phones sufficiently well.

[8] Chintok is a popular, pejorative term for cheap products coming from China. According to people's voice, these products last no longer than one needs to say the word 'tok'.

[9] ' Quoi qu'il en soit, ils n'allaient pas faire usage des fonctions d'un tel portable'. Vendor Amadou, c 35 years, 11 January 2017.

[10] All personal names changed, but pseudonyms are chosen from the same language and ethnic backgrounds.

[11] During this time, picture collections on phones had a different composition as rebel leaders played a much more important role than ordinary politicians (Förster 2013).

[12] Together with Seydou, I would estimate that about two thirds of these pictures show white women.

[13] *Photo d'amour* in local French. Seydou also claimed that 'all young men have such photos on their phones – and those who deny it are lying', 14 January 2017.

[14] The credit on most phones, smartphones and others, I saw during my fieldwork varied between 50 and 500 frs. CFA (0.08–0.80 €) in the rural area and between 150 and 1250 frs. CFA (0.23–1.91 €) in the city of Korhogo. Only a few older and wealthier persons had more credit on their phones.

[15] How financial aspects shape the use of mobile phone is examined for Cameroon by Tazanu (2012).

[16] 'Ils ont les plus beaux portables mais jamais du crédit', is a widespread saying in Korhogo.

[17] The third 'C', which is more widespread in capital cities and affluent milieus is the car. In a secondary city like Korhogo, a moped would do as well.

[18] A widespread metaphor for such practice is 'to read', but reading entails a highly specific structuring of time and consecutiveness that rarely fits the experience of looking at pictures. I therefore adopt Azoulay's (2008, 14) vocabulary of 'watching' instead of 'reading' photographs.

[19] *Grandes écoles* means in this context a teacher's college or a technical college below the rank of a university.

[20] This statement is based on my participation in urban everyday life. I have heard such and similar statements repeatedly over the years.

[21] In a compelling essay, Behrend (2012) describes a similar case in a conservative Muslim milieu in East Africa where women gain social visibility through photographs. As

Malik, they also control who is allowed to watch their photographs.

[22] My assistant was a married woman of 41 years. She was a possible client for Malik, which may have made it easier for him to show us the pictures on his phone.

[23] The conversation was conducted in French. The words, *. . .comment regarder les gens*, have a somewhat ambivalent undertone, though. In French, it also stands for observing others and to be on the watch since they may have malicious intentions.

[24] Haney (2012) examines how the photographic archive of a family in Accra allows its members to imagine an alternate history.

REFERENCES

Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Azoulay, A. 2008. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. New York: Zone Books.

Behrend, H. 2012. "The Terror of the Feast': Photography, Textiles and Memory in Weddings along the East African Coast." In *Photography in Africa: Ethnographic Perspectives*, edited by R. Vokes, 229–240. Suffolk, UK: James Currey.

Beyer, P. 2006. *Religions in Global Society*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Campbell, S. W., and Y. J. Park. 2008. "Social Implications of Mobile Telephony: The Rise of Personal Communication Society." *Sociology Compass* 2 (2): 371–387. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00080.x.

De Bruijn, M., F. Nyamnjoh, and I. Brinkman, eds. 2009. *Mobile Phones: The New Talking Drums of Everyday Africa*. Bamenda: Langaa.

Donner, J. 2008. "Research Approaches to Mobile Use in the Developing World: A Review of the Literature." *The Information Society* 24 (3): 140–159. doi:10.1080/01972240802019970.

Egloff, R. 2013. "Fotografie in Bamenda: Eine ethnographische Untersuchung in einer kamerunischen Stadt." PhD Thesis, University of Basel, Faculty of Humanities.

Etzo, S., and G. Collender. 2010. "The Mobile Phone 'Revolution' in Africa: Rhetoric or Reality?" *African Affairs* 109 (437): 659–668. doi:10.1093/afraf/adq045.

Friedman, J., and S. Randeria, eds. 2004. *Worlds on the Move*. London: Tauris.

Förster, T. 2013. "The Intermediality of Portraiture in Northern Côte d'Ivoire." In *Portraiture and Photography in Africa*, edited by E. Cameron and J. Peffer, 407–437. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Förster, T. 2015. "Bild Und Vorbild: Intermedialität Und Prädikation in Skulptur Und Neuen Medien Westafrikas." In *Leibhafte Kunst*, edited by D. Boschung and C. Vorster, 253–280. Paderborn: W. Fink.

Giddens, A. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hahn, H. P., and L. Kibora. 2008. "The Domestication of the Mobile Phone: Oral Society and New ICT in Burkina Faso." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 46 (1): 87–109. doi:10.1017/S0022278X07003084.

Haney, E. 2012. "Empyting the Gallery: The Archive's Fuller Circle." In *Photography in Africa: Ethnographic Perspectives*, edited by R. Vokes, 127–139. Suffolk, UK: James Currey.

Hannerz, U. 1996. *Transnational Connections*. London: Routledge.

Lewellen, T. 2002. *The Anthropology of Globalization*. Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

Ling, R., and J. Donner. 2009. *Mobile Communication*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Inda, J. X., and R. Rosaldo, eds. 2002. *The Anthropology of Globalization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Pfaff, J. 2010. "Mobile Phone Geographies." *Geography Compass* 4 (10): 1433–1447. doi:10.1111/j.1749-8198.2010.00388.x.

Piot, C. 1999. *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rehbein, B., and H. Schwengel. 2008. *Theorien Der Globalisierung*. Konstanz: UVK.

Soares, B. 2013. "Islam in Mali since the 2012 Coup." Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology website, June 10, 2013. Accessed December 16, 2016. https://culanth.org/fieldsights/321-islam-in-mali-since-the-2012-coup.

Tazanu, P. 2012. *Being Available and Reachable: New Media and Cameroonian Transnational Sociality*. Bamenda: Langaa.

Tomlinson, J. 1999. *Globalisation and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vokes, R., ed. 2012. *Photography in Africa: Ethnographic Perspectives*. Suffolk, UK: James Currey.

Zegeye, A., and R. Muponde. 2012. "The Social Lives of Mobile Telephony in Africa: Towards a Research Agenda." *African Identities* 10 (2): 123–128. doi:10.1080/14725843.2012.657829.